

Communiqué

Spring 2008

When the Fire's Out,
the Job's Not Done

2007 FIRE SIEGE

OVERVIEWS & PERSPECTIVES

Honoring the Past,
Looking Towards the Future



**CAL
FIRE**

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



cover: Santa Ana winds propel flames causing erratic fire behavior in San Diego County.

current page: A Siskiyou engine crew protects a home from the approaching Harris Fire in San Diego County.

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From the Director

The 2007 fire season is over and has once again proven that CAL FIRE is second to none. Even during one of the state's largest natural disasters, the bravery and dedication of our firefighters shone through.

Even before we entered October, the 2007 fire season had already seen a number of high profile fires. In May, CAL FIRE battled fires just outside of downtown Los Angeles in Griffith Park and then on historic Catalina Island. In June, the Tahoe Basin was ravaged by the Angora Fire destroying over 240 homes. These fires were just a small sign of what was to come.

On Oct. 21 at 4:55 a.m, a small fire broke out in Malibu Canyon just south of the Pacific Coast Highway. Fanned by Santa Ana Winds and extremely dry conditions, the fire quickly engulfed the coastal city of Malibu. Over the next week new fires sparked across Southern California. When the smoke lifted over half a million acres were burned, over 2,200 homes were destroyed and ten people lost their lives.

This was without a doubt an extremely devastating fire siege. However, when we compare this siege to 2003, this year there were more fires, but nearly one-third less acreage burned, over a thousand more homes saved and less than half the number of fatalities. Even though we have come so far since 2003, there is still so much more we have to do.

On Jan. 10, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger proposed a massive funding change for our department. The Wildland Firefighting Initiative puts a priority on Californian's public safety by giving CAL FIRE the resources it needs to continue to meet its mission of keeping 95 percent of all wildfires to ten acres or less.

This proposal would put 1,100 new seasonal firefighters on the frontlines during peak fire season, bringing all of our fire engines to four-member crews. Since 2005, Governor Schwarzenegger has signed Executive Orders allowing us to staff our fire engines in Southern California with 4.0 staffing, but this would create a stable funding source with better

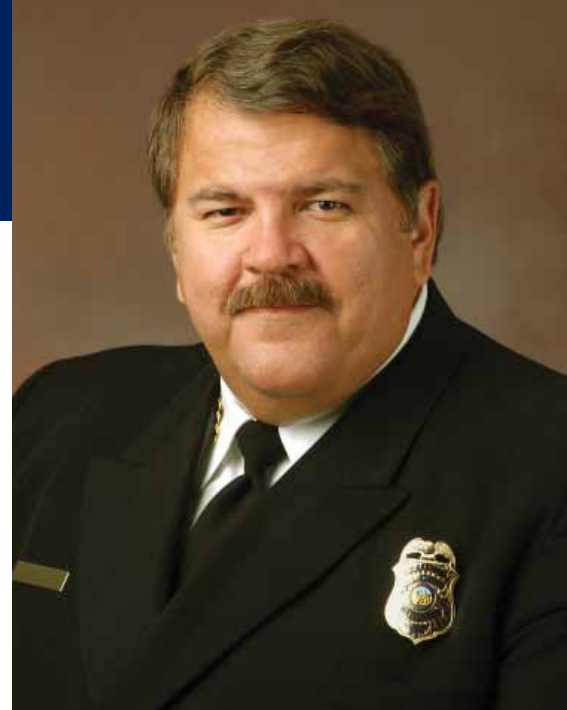
budget planning. The funding would allow CAL FIRE to replace all of its 11 aging helicopters with new, all weather, 24-hour a day flying, all risk helicopters. With these additions our department will be able to help save more lives and property when faced with conditions like we saw in the 2007 Fire Siege.

While the Wildland Firefighting Initiative still needs to pass the Legislature, I have been asked numerous times why all Californians should pay for fires that affect the wildlands? I explain to them that wildfires cost all taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars each year. For the Oct. 2007 wildfires, taxpayers paid over \$291 million in all costs associated with the fires. This cost was paid by all Californians, not just those directly affected. With additional staff and equipment we will be able to reduce the size of wildfires and reduce the amount paid for fire suppression.

Another benefit for all Californians is the fact that CAL FIRE provides mutual aid to local governments across the state for all types of emergencies on a daily basis. We are also an all risk department that provides leadership and resources during major disasters besides wildfires. We have sent crews and teams throughout the state to assist with earthquakes, floods, major hazardous material spills, and more. Many times these natural disasters occur outside CAL FIRE's State Responsibility Areas, but when there is a need, we are there.

Protecting the environment is another priority that affects all Californians. In our mission we are charged with protecting the state's watershed. Wildfires pollute the water with ash and debris. This directly affects the drinking water for the entire state.

It is clear that the Wildland Firefighting Initiative will help CAL FIRE to continue to meet its mission and serve residents not only living in the wildland, but also those in urban areas. This funding will help us with our response, but we must also continue to focus on prevention.



For many years now we have been focusing heavily on Defensible Space and the need for creating a 100-foot clearance of flammable vegetation from homes. We have addressed landscaping around the home, now we must address how a home is built. This year the new Wildland-Urban Interface Building Codes went into effect. These codes will establish a minimum standard for building materials so that they can provide a reasonable level of exterior protection against wild-fire exposure.

I strongly believe that with defensible space, stricter building codes and additional firefighting resources we will be able to save more lives, defend more homes and reduce the size of wildfires. We have come a long way and our unbelievable response to the 2007 wildfires is a true testament that CAL FIRE is the premier firefighting agency.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. H. J. Alvarez".



Honoring the Past, Looking Towards the Future CAL FIRE Unveils New Department Logo

By Daniel Berlant, Information Officer, Communications, Sacramento Headquarters

For many years employees and elected officials have attempted to brand the Department as CAL FIRE. After several close attempts, the legislature finally approved and the Governor signed a bill that would allow the Department to be known as CAL FIRE.

To help integrate the new CAL FIRE moniker into the Department, a branding committee was formed chaired by Chief Bill Holmes, unit chief of the Amador-El Dorado Unit, and Dave Titus, deputy director of legislation. The Branding Committee worked for nearly six months to create the new logo. "Many people may not know the level of professionalism and employee input that went into the development of the new logo," Chief Holmes continued "this was truly a team effort."

On May 5, 2006, Chief Ruben Grijalva unveiled CAL FIRE's new logo during the kick-off event for Wildfire Awareness Week at the State Capitol in Sacramento. The logo clearly displayed the Department's new moniker, CAL FIRE.

The Branding Committee worked hard on a new logo that would encompass all facets of the department, while making sure everything on it had a purpose and meaning. The Committee billed the new logo as "reflecting the evolution and diversity of the department's mission over time."

The emblem retains the traditional shape of a shield, which reminds employees of the duty they have to protect and serve the public. The full California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection name is still displayed to honor the history, culture and traditions, while the new CAL

FIRE moniker is boldly displayed. To honor the beginnings, the year the Board of Forestry was established, 1885, is shown on the patch.

The golden state was taken from the original Office of the State Fire Marshal emblem. The globe is meant as a reminder of how the department is a worldwide leader. The reason the globe is red is due to the constant battle against wildfires and global warming. The rising sun with the seven points of light reflects CAL FIRE's coordination and cooperation with local government.

One of the stipulations of the legislation allowing the department to use CAL FIRE was that the emblem could only be used on supplies after the old ones had ran out. This meant that no letterhead, equipment or signs could be replaced simply to change the logo. The new logo first started

to appear as CAL FIRE's new model 34/35 fire engine replacement fleet started to be sent to the field in May of 2007.

Shoulder patches did not start to appear on uniforms until mid-October 2007. Many employees wondered why there was a wait for the patch since the logo had been approved months earlier. CAL FIRE Assistant Procurement Officer Doris Brengettsey explained that it was a long process to find a vendor who could create the patch to the high standards set by the Department. "There is so much detail in the patch. We wanted the patch to be clean and readable," Brengettsey said.

As more and more employees, equipment and signs display the new patch and emblem, the CAL FIRE logo will become part of the Department's rich history. "Honor the past, while looking at the future," Holmes said.





Christopher A. Johnson
June 19, 1975 - September 20, 2007

Christopher A. Johnson joined CAL FIRE on May 19, 1997 as a seasonal firefighter in Squaw Valley. He was promoted in 2004 to fire apparatus engineer in the Fresno-Kings Unit. Sadly, on September 20, 2007 Chris lost his lengthy battle with leukemia.

Chris was a caring and dedicated husband and father. He leaves behind his wife, Rebecca, and son C.J. He will be greatly missed by family and friends.



"Through mutual respect, coordination meetings, officer associations, joint training and information sharing, the agencies are well prepared to work together during emergencies."

Strong Interagency Relationships Creates Exceptional Public Service

By Brad Lutts, Unit Chief, Lassen-Modoc Unit

The Lassen-Modoc Unit has long recognized the value of maintaining close working relationships with other emergency response and support agencies within its local sphere of influence. This cooperation is vital to providing an effective full service emergency response system, particularly in the more remote areas of the State.

In Lassen-Modoc, this collaborative effort includes local fire and law enforcement agencies, the County Office of Emergency Services, several federal wildland fire agencies, a military base, private service providers, and various state agencies including CAL FIRE. Through mutual respect, coordination meetings, officer associations, joint training and information sharing, agencies are well prepared to work together during emergencies.

At the heart of this emergency response system is SIFC, the Susanville Interagency Fire Center. SIFC was established in 1970 and now provides 24-hour emergency dispatch services

to the Lassen National Forest, Bureau of Land Management, Lassen Volcanic National Park and CAL FIRE's Lassen-Modoc Unit. Through a cooperative agreement between CAL FIRE and the Firenet Lassen Joint Powers Agency, SIFC also provides emergency dispatch services to 23 local government fire districts and city fire departments, the California Correctional Center Fire Department and three emergency medical service providers in Lassen and Northern Plumas counties. SIFC was the first fully integrated interagency emergency command center in the nation and remains as the premier model of interagency cooperation.

In 2004, SIFC moved into a new facility. The 9,000 square foot structure accommodates a main dispatch floor with six state-of-the-art dispatch consoles, a large "Expanded Dispatch" area for processing resource orders for major incidents, dispatcher living quarters, a main conference room and a number of workrooms and offices.

SIFC is also the designated Emergency Operations Center for the Lassen County Office of Emergency Services and functions as the alternate 911 public safety answering point and alternate dispatch center for the Lassen County Sheriff's Office and Susanville City Police Department.

Having strong interagency relationships, a working knowledge of each agency's policies and procedures, and an understanding of their differing missions, strategies and legal mandates is invaluable. With these issues identified and resolved prior to an emergency, the Unit is able to provide the most efficient utilization of resources and as a result, furnishes exceptional service to the public.





When the Fire's Out, the Job's not Done BAER Teams Protect Lives and Property

By Pete Cafferata, Forest Hydrologist & John Munn, Soil Erosion Studies Project Leader, Sacramento Headquarters

In an effort to prevent loss of life and property due to landslides and mud flows, CAL FIRE joined many other state and federal agencies to conduct post-fire Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) assessments for the southern California fires that occurred in late October and early November of last year.

Overall, more than 90 state employees conducted BAER assessments on almost 400,000 acres of state responsibility area (SRA) lands.

These state assessments were conducted in response to Governor Schwarzenegger's Executive Order (S-13-07) and were focused primarily on burned areas on or next to SRA lands. The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and Department of Interior (DOI) conducted BAER assessments on federal lands.

While the USFS has conducted multidisciplinary BAER assessments for several years, this is the first time CAL FIRE has

undertaken post-fire assessment work on such a large scale. A framework for the State's response was provided by the post-fire work on the Angora Fire in the Lake Tahoe Basin earlier in 2007.

Post-fire watershed rehabilitation has evolved considerably since the 1950's, when annual rye grass was commonly spread by planes and helicopters on

burned hill slopes. This practice continued through the 1980's, but research conducted in the 1990's showed that it is rarely effective in preventing surface erosion or mud flows.

Current post-fire assessments focus on identifying on-site and downstream threats to public health and safety, with less emphasis on preventing hill slope erosion.

above: Rice Fire state BAER team examines burned watershed above Red Mountain Reservoir in San Diego County. Photo by Pete Cafferata.

right: Dave Longstreth, California Geological Survey, views homes at risk in the Santiago Fire during a helicopter reconnaissance flight. Photo by Clay Bradow.



To cover the large number of Southern California wildfires that occurred in late 2007, the state formed seven BAER teams made up of representatives from CAL FIRE, California Geological Survey, Department of Water Resources, Department of Fish and Game, Department of Parks and Recreation, and Regional Water Quality Control Boards. These teams consisted of engineers, geologists, hydrologists, foresters, biologists, botanists, archeologists and GIS experts.

BAER Team members looked for threats to the public from landslides, mud flows, flooding, and road hazards. They also worked to identify risks to water quality, botanical and cultural resources, wildlife, and fisheries. The teams determined whether measures were needed to prevent or mitigate identified threats.

Six state teams conducted assessments on the Santiago, Canyon, Rice, Witch/Poomacha, Harris, and Corral Fires. An additional team was assembled for the remaining smaller fires. Coordination and direction of the teams was provided by a

session. Initial information included soil burn severity maps developed from satellite imagery and summary directions on how to conduct the assessment.

After arriving at their assigned fires in Orange, Los Angeles, San Bernardino, and San Diego Counties, the BAER teams identified preliminary values-at-risk using maps and Google Earth imagery, including homes, highways, rail lines, businesses and water storage reservoirs. The teams then began more detailed field investigations, particularly in areas with higher burn severity and identified values-at-risk.



By mid-December, evacuations had already been ordered twice in these areas as a result of post-fire rainstorms.

Several lessons were learned from the state BAER teams' assessments. First, although the MASG effort was successful, improved coordination and communication is needed among the many state, local, and federal agencies that may be called upon to respond to future post-fire assessments.

Second, funding mechanisms and cost recovery plans need to be better



above: A Burned watershed from the Rice Fire in San Diego County around a water storage tank at the Red Mountain Reservoir.

left: Houses evaluated for risk of mud slides below a burned steep drainage from the Rice Fire in San Diego County. Photo by Pete Cafferata.

Multi-Agency Support Group (MASG) that was led by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the state Office of Emergency Services (OES).

The assessment process used by the BAER teams was similar on each of the 2007 wildfires.

First, individual teams were assembled at the MASG Headquarters in San Bernardino County, where a CAL FIRE team leader was assigned. Each team received background information on their assigned fire during an orientation

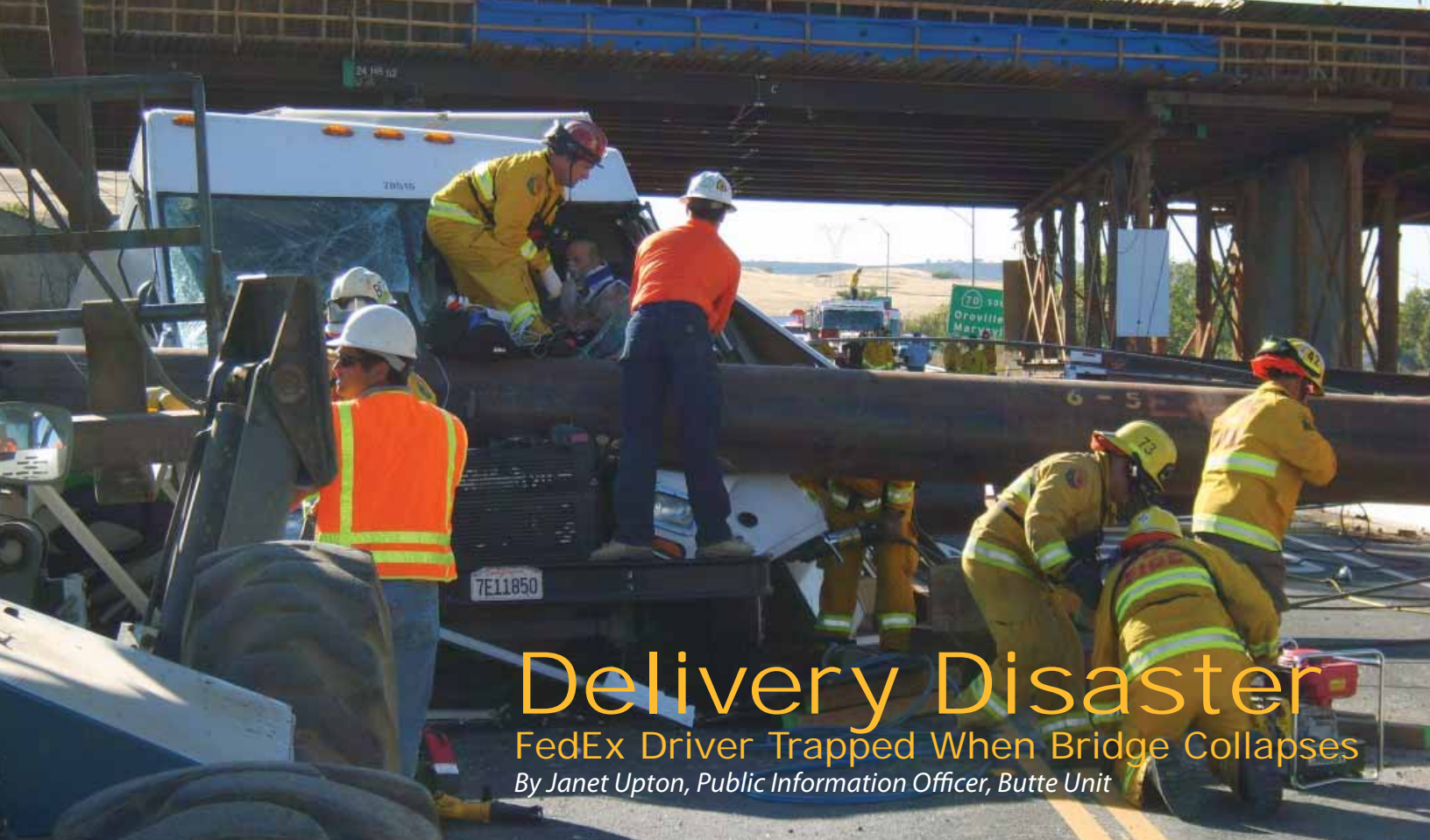
Typical team recommendations included the need for detailed follow-up inspections at sites with a high risk to human life from landslides and mud flows and the use of rain gauge systems with telemetry to provide "early warning" for homeowner evacuations. Measures for protecting threatened or endangered (T/E) species and archeological sites were also recommended.

The Santiago Fire in Orange County posed the biggest threat to human life, where extreme hazards exist for mud flows in Modjeska, Williams and Silverado Can-

coordinated among all local, state and federal agencies that may be called upon to respond to these types of missions.

Finally, if the State of California continues to conduct post-fire assessment work on major wildfires, training and funding is needed to prepare Emergency Response Incident Management Teams.

All the state and federal BAER reports are posted on the following website: <http://www.oes.ca.gov/Operational/OESHome.nsf/PrintView/6C9651A85E8E98D988257398007B899F?OpenDocument>



Delivery Disaster

FedEx Driver Trapped When Bridge Collapses

By Janet Upton, Public Information Officer, Butte Unit

At 7:20 a.m. the morning of Tues., July 31, 2007, the Butte Unit's Emergency Command Center (ECC) was swamped with 9-1-1 calls about a "bridge" collapse at the



east end of Hwy 149 where it meets State Route 70 just north of Oroville. Caltrans was working on a highway overpass project to improve safety at one of the deadliest intersections in the north state. Initial reports indicated multiple victims and at least one fatality. The victims were said to have been trapped inside their vehicles under a dozen large, steel beams ranging from 3,000 to 12,000 pounds each.

The first unit to arrive on scene was Fire Captain Chad Porter, a trained paramedic.

His report consisted of a "good news, bad news" scenario. The good news: There were no fatalities and only two victims, one who was trapped inside a vehicle. The bad news: One of the victims was pinned in his FedEx truck under 36,000 pounds of steel. The scene was bisected by the debris from the collapse and adjacent false work (a type of heavy duty scaffolding) was unstable at best.

One of the next to arrive was Battalion Chief Russ Fowler, who assumed command of the incident, "The first objective was to pro-

U.S.. Bridge Disasters

By Stephanie Kuidis, Student Assistant, Communications

1940- Tacoma Narrows Bridge, Olympic Peninsula, Washington – This bridge collapsed due to poor design against high winds. The bridge acted as a sail would, capturing the wind and holding it, unlike the Golden Gate Bridge, which allowed the wind to pass through it.

1967 – Silver Bridge, Point Pleasant, West Virginia – 46 deaths were a result of the failure of a single eye-bar in the suspension chain, which caused this bridge to collapse.

1977 – Benjamin Harrison Memorial Bridge, Hopewell, Virginia – This bridge collapse occurred when the S.S. Marine Floridian crashed into the raised drawbridge after losing control due to a steering malfunction. The raised

drawbridge allowed people to see the approaching ship, leave their cars and flee for safety. Fortunately, there were no deaths or serious injuries.

1980 – Sunshine Skyway Bridge, Tampa, Florida – 35 deaths were the result of a ship hitting the 5.5 mile long bridge during a storm.

1987 – Hatchie River Bridge, Hwy US-51, Tennessee – Eight deaths were the result of the shifting of the river channel which weakened the buried support beams.

1989 – San Francisco Bay Bridge, San Francisco, California – One death was the result of this bridge collapse caused by the Loma Prieta Earthquake, which was recorded at 6.9 on the Richter scale.

1989 – Cypress Street Viaduct, Oakland, California – 42 Deaths were the result of this bridge collapsing due to the Loma Prieta Earthquake.



vide for personnel safety and the safety of injured and trapped victims," Fowler said.

"Maintaining site access control was challenging but critical given we had multiple, large, unsupported steel columns and beams hanging precariously above and around rescuers."

As firefighters and Caltrans engineers worked to stabilize the scene, Captain Porter entered the crushed cab of the truck to treat the victim as crews worked to extricate the victim's lower extremities from beneath the wreckage. Captain Porter built a rapport with the victim, 45-year-old Robert Sylvester of Chico. Sylvester later told the Sacramento Bee that he found comfort in Captain Porter's encouragement even when he couldn't feel his legs and at times, wondered if he was going to live. "I'm glad I was able to bring some comfort to Mr. Sylvester. It was a long and complex extrication," Porter said, "We talked a lot about our kids."

A second victim, a contract worker for Caltrans, literally "rode" the 50 inch wave of the collapsing false work while still

harnessed into his safety gear. The victim was rescued by the California Highway Patrol officer assigned to the construction site. He suffered traumatic injuries to his extremities and is recovering with the help of physical therapy.

The incident dominated the national media until 24 hours later when a large bridge collapsed in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Deputy Chief George Morris said, "This is a low frequency, high risk type of operation we don't respond to every day."

When Caltrans began the project last year, site tours and training were requested, Morris said. "The training paid big dividends in this case because we knew what we were dealing with and what on-site equipment we could use to expedite stabilizing the collapse area."

FedEx driver Rob Sylvester is now back at work. His first delivery in his new truck was to 176 Nelson Avenue in Oroville, CA – the headquarters of the CAL FIRE Butte Unit and Butte County Fire Department. The

FedEx Corporation purchased a \$30,000 set of extrication equipment and donated it to the fire department in appreciation for rescuing their employee.

upper left: CAL FIRE/ Butte County Fire crews work to extricate a trapped victim from collapsed scaffolding.

upper right: Collapse victim Robert Sylvester and his family pose with CAL FIRE first responders as they accept rescue equipment donated by FedEx.

below: The crushed cab of the FedEx truck, where the driver, Robert Sylvester, was trapped.



1989 – Winkley Bridge, Heber Springs, Arkansas – Five deaths occurred after this historical streamline suspension bridge collapsed due to stress caused by pedestrians purposefully causing the bridge to violently swing side to side.

1993 – Big Bayou Canot Train Bridge, Mobile, Alabama – 47 deaths were the result of a tugboat ramming Amtrak's bridge by mistake. The tugboat operator mistook the bridge's support beams as a barge in the predawn fog. Just as the bridge collapsed, Amtrak's Sunset Limited passenger train plunged into the Big Bayou Canot.

2001 – Queen Isabella Causeway, South Padre Island, Texas - Eight deaths were the result of a string of barges that crashed into the bridge support after a towboat captain lost control of them. Drivers, unaware of the bridge's collapse, drove into the channel 85 feet below the bridge.

2002 – I-40 Bridge, Webbers Fall, Oklahoma – 14 deaths occurred after a tugboat collided with the I-40 Bridge support, causing the bridge to collapse.

2003 – I-95 Bridge, Bridgeport, Connecticut – This bridge collapsed when a fuel truck crash weakened the bridge structure.

2007 – MacArthur Maze, Oakland, California – This bridge collapsed after a gasoline tanker overturned and spilled 8,600 gallons of gasoline, which then caught fire, weakening the bridge's structure. Fortunately no deaths occurred.

2007 – Hwy 149 Bridge, Oroville, California – Two were injured when steel beams came crashing down from the Hwy 149 Bridge, the cause is currently being investigated.

2007 – I-35 Bridge, Minneapolis, Minnesota – 13 deaths occurred when a span of the I-35 Bridge over the Mississippi River broke into sections and collapsed during rush hour traffic, the cause of the collapse is currently being investigated.

Sources: WISN, CNN, MSNBC, CBS11, The Oklahoma Department of Libraries, The New York Times, BridgeHunters.com, The San Francisco Chronicle, Library of Congress: The Historical American Engineering Record, Washington State Department of Transportation, Wikipedia

2007 FIRE SIEGE OVERVIEW

By Daniel Berlant, Information Officer, Communications, Sacramento Headquarters

On Saturday, Oct. 20, 2007 at 9:42 p.m., a small wildfire was reported along Interstate 5 six miles north of Castaic in Los Angeles County. Driven by strong winds the blaze quickly grew to 12,000 acres by Sunday morning. The fire on the Angeles National Forest was just the beginning of what would turn out to be one of the most devastating fire sieges in history.

Up until October, the California fire season had been relatively light. In fact, prior to October, California's wildfire season was well below the five-year average for number of wildfires and the number of acres burned. As of Oct. 1, 2007, only 6,574 wildfires had burned in CAL FIRE's jurisdiction with 84,429 acres burned. Compared to 2006 for the same time period there were 7,654 wildfires burning 212,429 acres.

Fairly seasonable conditions were seen throughout the region during the middle of October. That all changed as forecasters started to predict a strong offshore flow beginning on Oct. 21. CAL FIRE and other Southern California fire departments began to increase staffing and pre-position fire equipment throughout the Southland.

By daybreak on Sunday, numerous wildfires had sparked across Southern California. The combination of strong winds, single digit humidity levels, and dry conditions, created the perfect recipe for a major disaster. Fueled by dry vegetation and fanned by 20 to 40 mph Santa Ana Winds, firefighters quickly began to battle a raging inferno.

As the Ranch Fire on the Angeles National Forest began to spot ahead of itself and threaten Ventura County and the community of Piru, Los Angeles County firefighters began to fight their own battle, as the Canyon Fire ripped through the coastal community of Malibu. Just hours after the Canyon Fire first started, a new fire was



reported further south in San Diego County near the U.S.-Mexico border. The Harris Fire quickly engulfed the Potrero area and brought reports of possible fatalities and injuries. Included in the numerous injuries that day was a crew from the San Diego Unit on the Harris Fire.

All four crew members were airlifted to an area hospital in critical condition. About forty miles north of the Harris Fire, the Witch Fire was reported around noon, east of Ramona. At the end of day two of the siege, nearly 4,000 firefighters were battling eight major wildfires, which had burned over 33,000 acres.

As the sun rose on Monday, so did the Santa Ana wind gusts and high temperatures. Weather stations reported winds over 70 mph. By dawn, three new large fires had been reported as more firefighters poured into the region from across the state. Even with the onslaught of more ground resources, the wind forced most aircraft to be grounded throughout the day. Safety standards do not allow aircraft

to fly if winds exceed 30 mph. The 70+ mph winds that day hampered air efforts.

With the erratic fire behavior continuing to threaten homes, a massive evacuation was underway for thousands of residents. A fire even forced the evacuation of the Magic Mountain Theme Park. As thousands left their homes and belongings to get out of harm's way, evacuation shelters began to open all across the region. The San Diego Chargers even moved out of Qualcomm Stadium to allow displaced residents a place to go. By nightfall of day three of the siege, roughly 6,500 firefighters and over 880 fire engines battled 13 major wildfires, which had burned nearly 270,000 acres.

Winds let up a little on Tuesday, but still posed a major threat with sustained speeds of 25 mph and gusts up to the mid 40s. Santa Ana conditions continued as a new fire was reported on the La Jolla Indian Reservation in Northern San Diego County. Smoke and weather conditions continued to make air operations difficult

and dangerous forcing aircrafts to be used sporadically when winds briefly calmed down. As day four came to an end, over 8,400 firefighters and 1,000 fire engines were fighting 14 major wildfires, which had charred over 410,000 acres.

On Wednesday, it appeared as if the wind event was beginning to subside. Many of the large fires reported moderate behavior allowing crews to aggressively attack the flames. However, forecasters anticipated a change in wind direction to a more normal on-shore flow. This would bring the potential to adversely affect the fires by causing them to grow in the opposite direction. Evacuations remained in place throughout Southern California as crews now began to battle the wind shift. Day five saw good progress as 10,750 firefighters contained a number of fires leaving ten fires actively burning over 460,000 acres.

On Thursday, the temperatures remained above normal and humidity levels low, the wind pattern began to return to a normal flow with wind speeds under 20 mph. Great progress was made, though incident commanders did not become complacent over the dangers with the recent wind shift. With more stable winds, firefighters were able to successfully use

firing operations to tie containment lines together. As the sun set on day six, there were over 11,785 firefighters assigned to the siege. Firefighters made good progress on nine fires which blackened over 487,000 acres.

Throughout the next couple of days, cooler temperatures and reduced wind activity provided more cooperative conditions for firefighting. It was not until early November that the last of the raging wildfires were fully contained. As the smoke dissipated it became clear, the fire siege of 2007 would go down in history as one the largest natural disasters in California history. During the week of Oct. 20, 2007 there were over 250 reported new wildfires in Southern California. Firefighters were kept busy for a couple of weeks, but out of all the initial attack fires, only 17 of them grew to large extended attack fires, which charred just over 510,000 acres.

California law enforcement helped evacuate nearly one million residents. This was the largest mass evacuation in California history. Sadly, 17 people lost their lives from the fire siege. Ten people were killed directly by the fires, three died while evacuating and four people perished as a result of the strain and stress the wildfires brought. More than 100 firefighters were injured, including four from CAL FIRE who were injured in a fire engine burn over.

Even though the 2007 fire siege saw more major wildfires than the 2003 siege, California's firefighters did a tremendous job. There were nine more significant wildfires than 2003, but 367,224 fewer acres burned, 1,477 less homes were lost and 14 less people lost their lives. The firefighting during the 2007 siege once again proved that California is second to none in battling wildfires.



2007 FIRE SIEGE TIMELINE

OCTOBER

By Stephanie Kuidis, Student Assistant, Communications

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10						



Saturday
Oct. 20

9:42 pm Ranch Fire
Los Angeles County

Sunday
Oct. 21

1:03 am Martin Ranch
San Bernadino County

4:55 am Canyon Fire
Los Angeles County

6:00 am Sedgwick Fire
Santa Barbara County

9:30 am Harris Fire
San Diego County

12:35 pm Witch Fire
San Diego County

1:00 pm Buckweed Fire
Los Angeles County

3:52 pm Roca Fire
Riverside County

6:00 pm Santiago Fire
Orange County

11:37 pm McCoy Fire
San Diego County

Monday
Oct. 22

1:46 am Coronado Hills
San Diego County

4:16 am Rice Fire
San Diego County

5:08 am Grass Valley
San Bernardino County

8:02 am Slide Fire
San Bernardino County

11:38 am Cajon Fire
San Bernardino County

2:17 pm Magic Fire
Los Angeles County

11:10 pm Rosa Fire
Riverside County

Roca Fire Contained
Acreage Burned: 270
Est. Suppression Costs: \$358,000
Firefighters: 303
Structures lost: 1
Cause: Under investigation

Tuesday
Oct. 23

3:13 am Poomacha Fire
San Diego County

9:20 am Ammo Fire
San Diego County

Coronado Hills Contained
Acreage Burned: 300
Firefighters: 77
Structures lost: 2
Cause: Under investigation

McCoy Fire Contained
Acreage Burned: 353
Est. Suppression Costs: \$4,200,000
Firefighters: 53
Structures lost: 2
Cause: Under investigation

Sedgwick Fire Contained
Acreage Burned: 710
Est. Suppression Costs: \$1,050,000
Firefighters: 516
Structures lost: 0
Cause: Arching Power Lines

Wednesday
Oct. 24

Cajon Fire Contained
Acreage Burned: 250
Firefighters: 53
Structures lost: 0
Cause: Under investigation

Magic Fire Contained
Acreage Burned: 2,824
Est. Suppression Costs: \$900,000
Firefighters: 428
Structures lost: 0
Cause: Under investigation

Rosa Fire Contained
Acreage Burned: 411
Est. Suppression Costs: \$670,000
Firefighters: 192
Structures lost: 2
Cause: Under investigation

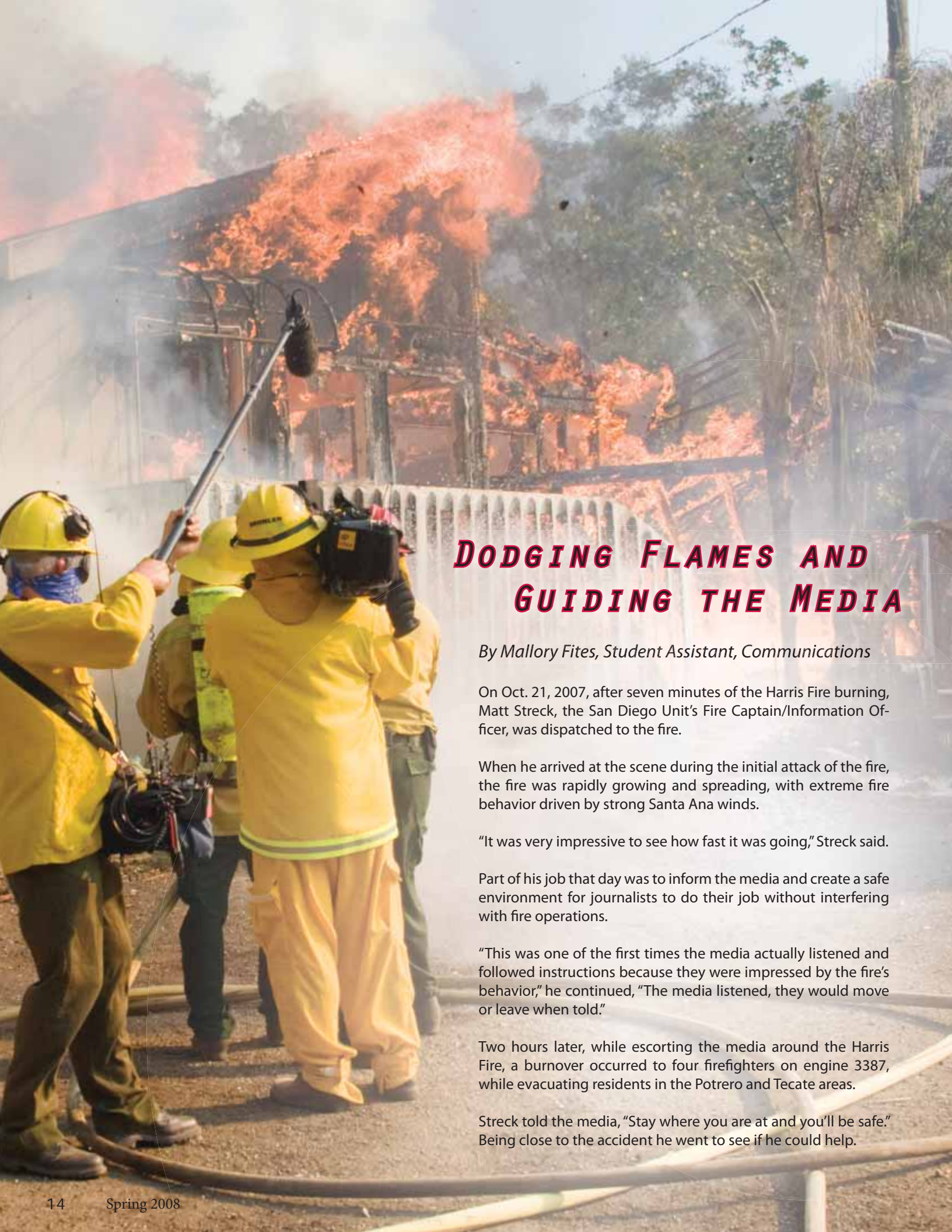
Thursday
Oct. 25

Canyon Fire Contained
Acreage Burned: 4,521
Est. Suppression Costs: \$5,800,000
Firefighters: 1,765
Structures lost: 8
Cause: Under investigation

Martin Ranch Fire Contained
Acreage Burned: 123
Firefighters: 77
Structures lost: 0



Saturday Oct. 27	Sunday Oct. 28	Tuesday Oct. 30	Wednesday Oct. 31	Thursday Nov. 8	Saturday Nov. 10
Buckweed Fire Contained Acreage Burned: 38,356 Est. Suppression Costs: \$7,450,000 Firefighters: 1,157 Structures lost: 63 Cause: Arson/Accident	Ammo Fire Contained Acreage Burned: 21,004 Est. Suppression Costs: \$708,000 Firefighters: 225 Structures lost: 0 Cause: Under investigation Rice Fire Contained Acreage Burned: 9,472 Est. Suppression Costs: \$6,800,000 Firefighters: 1,073 Structures lost: 248 Cause: Human/ Electrical	Grass Valley Fire Contained Acreage Burned: 1,247 Est. Suppression Costs: \$7,600,000 Firefighters: 1,051 Structures lost: 178 Cause: Power Lines Ranch Fire Contained Acreage Burned: 58,401 Est. Suppression Costs: \$9,000,000 Firefighters: 1,264 Structures lost: 10 Cause: Under investigation	Harris Fire Contained Acreage Burned: 90,440 Est. Suppression Costs: \$21,000,000 Firefighters: 2,544 Structures lost: 373 Cause: Under investigation Slide Fire Contained Acreage Burned: 12,759 Est. Suppression Costs: \$21,300,000 Firefighters: 2,129 Structures lost: 312 Cause: Under investigation Witch Fire Contained Acreage Burned: 197,990 Est. Suppression Costs: \$18,000,000 Firefighters: 2,883 Structures lost: 1,624 Cause: Under investigation	Santiago Fire Contained Acreage Burned: 28,400 Est. Suppression Costs: \$17,400,000 Firefighters: 1,982 Structures lost: 26	Poomacha Fire Contained Acreage Burned: 49,410 Est. Suppression Costs: \$20,600,000 Firefighters: 2,793 Structures lost: 217 Cause: Under investigation



DODGING FLAMES AND GUIDING THE MEDIA

By Mallory Fites, Student Assistant, Communications

On Oct. 21, 2007, after seven minutes of the Harris Fire burning, Matt Streck, the San Diego Unit's Fire Captain/Information Officer, was dispatched to the fire.

When he arrived at the scene during the initial attack of the fire, the fire was rapidly growing and spreading, with extreme fire behavior driven by strong Santa Ana winds.

"It was very impressive to see how fast it was going," Streck said.

Part of his job that day was to inform the media and create a safe environment for journalists to do their job without interfering with fire operations.

"This was one of the first times the media actually listened and followed instructions because they were impressed by the fire's behavior," he continued, "The media listened, they would move or leave when told."

Two hours later, while escorting the media around the Harris Fire, a burnover occurred to four firefighters on engine 3387, while evacuating residents in the Potrero and Tecate areas.

Streck told the media, "Stay where you are at and you'll be safe." Being close to the accident he went to see if he could help.



All eighteen immigrants were taken to the hospital with various burn injuries and they all survived.

Despite the best efforts in getting people to leave their homes, some chose to stay behind. Streck said, "Our employees risked their lives including fire engine 3387 to save people who had been warned to move but didn't."

After the fire siege Streck reflected on the media coverage, "There are always going to be people who look to criticize. In this case, so much good work was done by everybody. Not just CAL FIRE, but all the agencies working together."

"Ask anybody who was there first hand. I saw great firefighters and I saw our employees risking their lives to save people."

Getting to the burnover was difficult because the fire seemed to be consuming everything in sight. "At one point the smoke and flames were so bad my truck actually started to stall out," he said.

He quickly pulled out his air filter which had partially been melted and was full of corroded carbon and smoke. He got out of his vehicle with helmet and gloves on and felt somebody pushing him from behind.

That person was Mother Nature, sending howling gusts of winds. Next thing he knew his helmet flew off and embers flew into his face burning his eyelid.

He then drove through the flames to the fire station where the burned CAL FIRE firefighters were being taken care of. He soon learned that the burned firefighters were being transported to a local hospital.

He also heard great news: the fourth firefighter whom he believed was dead, was actually alive and being rushed to the hospital.

Just when he thought he might be able to stop and take a breath, there was a large number of burned victims coming from the hills. Eighteen immigrants had been taken to the burn unit where he was.



upper left: Fox News Reporter Geraldo Rivera interviews Mike Mohler, Riverside Unit fire apparatus engineer, about the status of the Harris Fire.

above: CBS Evening News host Katie Couric talks to Riverside firefighters for her show's coverage of the wildfires.





FIRE SIEGE

Perspective: Through the Lens

By Wes Schultz, Photographer, Communications



"Firefighters from all over the Southwest, including Mexico, came together and worked as one doing the best job they knew how."



Wes Schultz has been in the fire service for over 40 years starting with CAL FIRE many years ago and retired as an Assistant Chief with the Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District. Here is his account of the Fire Siege while taking photographs in Southern California for CAL FIRE.

For the past few years I've volunteered out of CAL FIRE headquarters as a Volunteer In Prevention taking photographs for the department.

On Sunday, Oct. 21 Public Information Officer Daniel Berlant called me from Sacramento Headquarters. He asked if I would be able to go to Southern California to photograph the rapidly, developing fires. Without hesitation I said, of course I would!

News was starting to hit the Sacramento area concerning the fires down South. I had already started pacing the floor and packing.

The plane out of Sacramento scheduled for 6:30 p.m. was delayed so I didn't get to San Diego until around 11:30 p.m. While flying over Southern California just before landing I saw the fires from the plane's window. Then I heard the pilot talking over the speakers pointing out the fires seen below and trying to explain what was happening on the ground.

From the air, the Southern California sky was covered in smoke and I started wondering which one was the Harris Fire. All I knew was I was to report to the Harris Fire near a town called Jamul.



"There were so many untold stories of human beings, called firefighters, going way beyond their call to duty."



I arrived at Jamul, Station 66, around midnight. The glow of the fire was visible over the hills. Of course I wanted to go out right then and there, but I said to myself, "slow down."

I really didn't think the crews fighting fires that night needed a retired flatland firefighter traveling alone in a four-door, compact KIA (no real firefighter would ever drive a KIA) who had no idea about the lay of the land. So I spent the night in the KIA.

Early the next morning, I checked in with CAL FIRE Captain Julie Hutchinson lead PIO for the Harris Fire. Julie got me hooked up with CAL FIRE Captain Ruben Hernandez, Division W at the time, for orientation. After that I was off wishing I was still a young firefighter, mixing it up with the best of them.

I went down and got many great images of firefighters doing an incredible job. But what I noticed as much as fire operations was the way firefighters, of all ranks, worked in the field and did their jobs. Firefighters from all over the Southwest, including Mexico, worked as one doing the best job they knew how. There was little, if any, agency parochialism that was alive and well when I was a young

"I would bet there were thousands, of acts of bravery and going beyond that will never be written down or awards given. Firefighters are that way – 'I was just doing my job'."

firefighter. When a job was identified, it got done. It didn't matter what color the apparatus was, what agency, state or country they came from. Firefighters talked to one another and helped one another. The foe was the fire, not one another.

You simply had to be there to experience the dedication of all the firefighters I ran into. There was one young, CAL FIRE firefighter whose eyes were so bloodshot I thought he was going to bleed out - right then and there. He had been going strong for three days with little sleep and meals on the run - and wanting more. He was just one of many in the same situation and frame of mind. I didn't hear one complaint as to the working conditions, very long hours or extreme weather conditions - well, maybe a grumble or two about the weather. Firefighters understood the entire south state was burning and they were a part of a true statewide disaster.

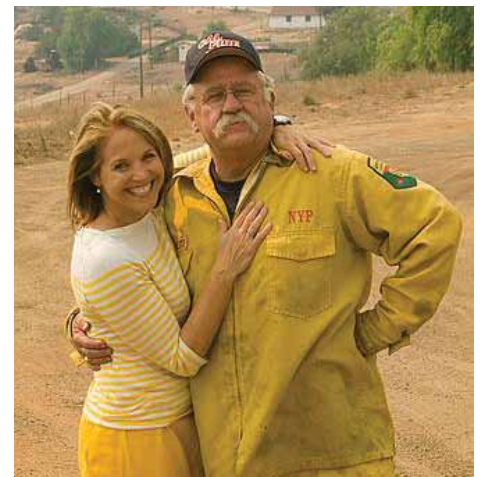
In many cases, the news media tried to spin a negative on the entire operation. Whenever I saw the media approach a firefighter and ask what was going wrong,

the firefighter would respond, "Other than the drought, high temperatures, up to 100 mph winds and fire all over area - nothing." Then the firefighter would go back to fighting fire.

There were so many untold stories of firefighters going way beyond the call to duty. I would bet there were thousands of acts of bravery and beyond that, which will never be written down nor awards given. Firefighters are that way—'I was just doing my job'. If you factored in all the fires, all the firefighters, law enforcement, Red Cross, EMS, local citizens who helped out their neighbors, youth groups, civic groups, etc, the count would be in the millions .

This event showed people truly helping people. I thought to myself, man have we come a long way since I was a kid just starting out in the fire service. I came away from the Harris Fire so proud I was a firefighter and still involved with fire service in some way. Every citizen in the State of California should be full of pride with the amount of positive actions that came together during a true state disaster.

below: Volunteer in Prevention Photographer, Wes Schultz, poses with CBS Evening News host Katie Couric.





Fire Station by the Sea

By Deanna Baxman, Battalion Chief, Sonoma-Lake-Napa Unit

On the Northern most tip of the Sonoma County Coast, south of Mendocino County, lies The Sea Ranch community. CAL FIRE's fire protection history for The Sea Ranch area dates back to the late 1940's.

Back then, the California Division of Forestry staffed the Mendocino Forest Fire Station located in a remote area south of The Sea Ranch, in the heart of logging country. The Mendocino station was eight miles inland from Highway 1 and the Sonoma County coast.

The station housed two fire engines, one bulldozer and one patrolman. The response areas for the Mendocino station covered several thousand acres and the "next in" fire engine was at least one hour away.



By the early 1970's, logging slowed and many lumber mills in the area closed. At that time, up on the coast, the eclectic Sea Ranch community had planted roots and was beginning to grow. What set this community apart from others was the unique vision for the homes and surrounding property to blend in with the natural Sonoma County coastal landscape.

In 1972, the California Division of Forestry signed a "Schedule A" agreement with the County of Sonoma to staff a fire engine at The Sea Ranch. The agreement began with one fire captain, three days per week and a small group of volunteer firefighters. The station was housed in a small building owned by the Sea Ranch Water Company.

In 1975, the Division of Forestry purchased property within the Sea Ranch community and a new station was built on Annapolis Road.

The Sea Ranch Fire Station blends into the community and is consistent with the architectural guidelines created by The Sea Ranch Design Committee. The new fire station became the home to the Mendocino (Schedule B) and The Sea Ranch Fire Department (Schedule A). The Sea Ranch Fire Station was opened for business in the winter of 1976. Both programs were staffed by CAL FIRE personnel.

CAL FIRE's commitment to The Sea Ranch community continues today. Since 1990, The Sea Ranch Association (TSRA) has been implementing a Fire Management Plan to reduce fire hazards on its property. CAL FIRE has partnered with TSRA by providing property inspections for homeowners and educating the community members on the importance of fuel reduction and defensible space.

Today, The Sea Ranch's "Schedule A" program is staffed by one fire captain and four fire apparatus engineers. The current roster includes 12 volunteers.

The crew maintains a fleet, including three fire engines, one rescue squad, one air and light unit, a chief's vehicle and one utility. The "Schedule B" program consists of two fire captains and five firefighters who staff one engine seasonally.

Captain Shelley Spear said, "Working as a captain for The Sea Ranch community is rewarding. The residents of The Sea Ranch have a great partnership with CAL FIRE personnel. The unique location and engaging residents, make this a great assignment for all of us who work at The Sea Ranch."



*"Matt was the definition of a firefighter.
Honorable and strong, and he will never be forgotten.
Thank you Matt for your service to us all...
you will be missed."*

DeeDee McGhen (Macrorie) - Pine Valley, CA

Matthew Richard Will

March 13, 1977 - October 9, 2007

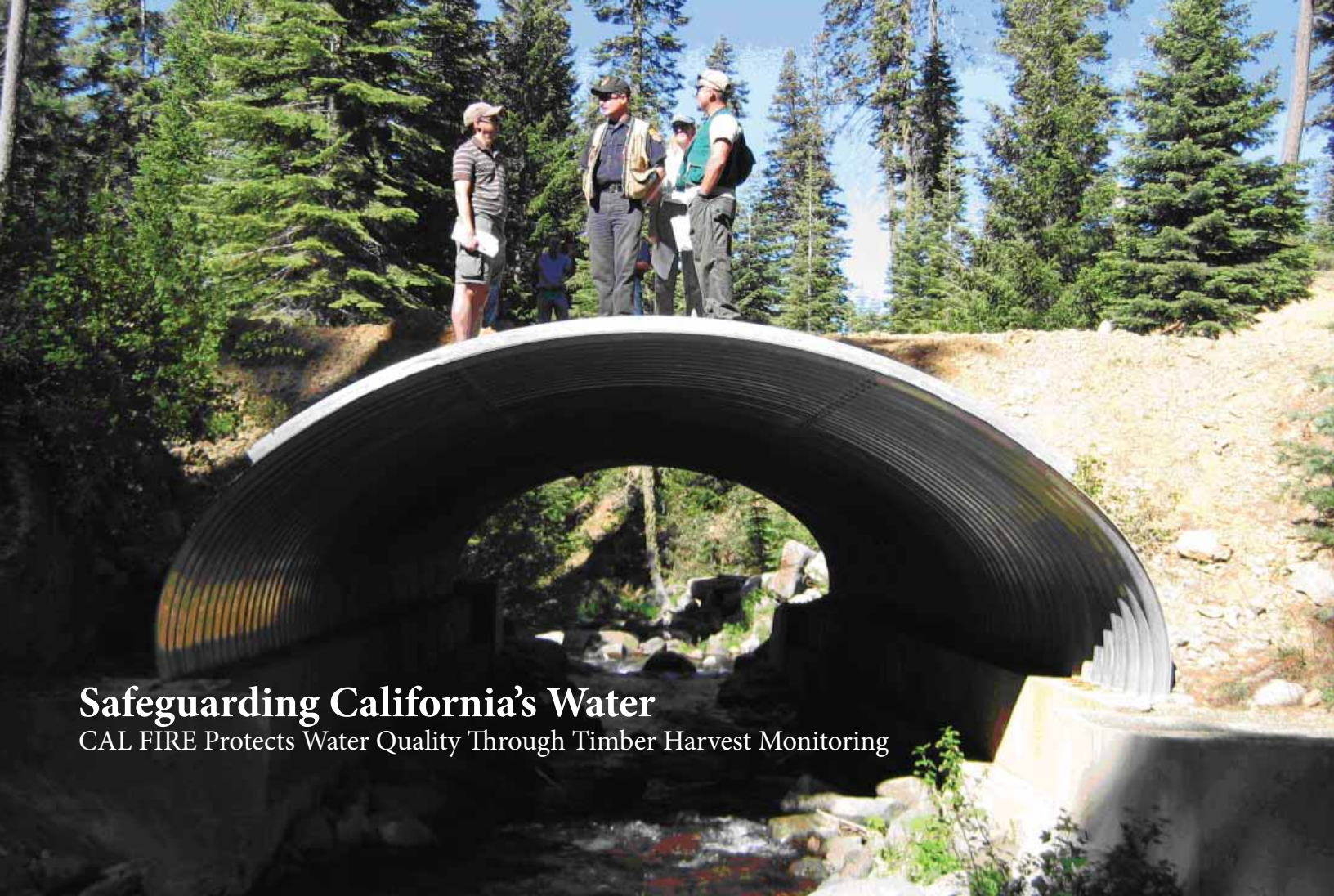
Matthew Richard Will joined CAL FIRE on May 19, 2003 as a heavy fire equipment operator. On Oct. 9, 2007, his life was claimed as a result of injuries he sustained in a rollover accident at a fire north of the Big Sur in Palo Canyon.

Matt loved the outdoors. The same sense of adventure that he brought to his job he shared in life with his family and friends. A capable and courageous heavy fire equipment operator, he was greatly respected by his colleagues.

Matt was willing to do everything possible to save others. He leaves behind people who love him deeply, especially his wife, DeeDee, his son Trysten, and his daughter Elsie.

His parents, two brothers, family and friends, share in their great pride that Matt Will was a hero.





Safeguarding California's Water

CAL FIRE Protects Water Quality Through Timber Harvest Monitoring

By Pete Cafferata, Forest Hydrologist, Forest Practice Program, Sacramento Headquarters

Water is often considered California's most important and controversial resource. Nearly 85 percent of California's average annual runoff is produced from forested watersheds. Improper logging practices have the potential to adversely impact water quality.

Many of the modern Forest Practice Rules (FPRs) developed by the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection to regulate logging on non-federal timberlands were passed to protect water quality from improper logging practices that regularly occurred before the mid-1970's. The FPRs are designed to keep sediment out of streams and retain trees along streams for shade and wildlife values.

CAL FIRE's Forest Practice Program regulates logging on approximately 7.3 million acres of non-federal commercial timberlands in California. CAL FIRE's Forest Practice Inspectors enforce the California Forest Practice Act and FPRs to ensure

that timber harvesting is done in a way that will protect all forest resources and water quality protection is particularly emphasized.

Monitoring forest practices is one way to ensure FPRs are working. In the past decade, the importance of forestry related water quality monitoring has increased significantly for two key reasons.

First, monitoring helps determine if federal and state listed fish species are being adequately protected. Coho salmon, Chinook salmon and steelhead trout have all been listed as threatened or endangered. Habitat protection for these species is critical to prevent extinction and maintain population numbers high enough to allow commercial and sport fishing.

Second, 90 percent of the watersheds in California's North Coast Region are listed as "impaired" by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency because of excessive

amounts of sediment in stream channels, which adversely impact fish habitats.

CAL FIRE has funded a monitoring program since 1991 to determine if logging activities are being carried out as required by law and are effective in protecting California's water quality. The Board's Monitoring Study Group has provided guidance for the program.

After using pilot projects in the early 1990's to develop and test monitoring methods, CAL FIRE sponsored two timber harvest monitoring programs from 1996 to 2004.

above: Shane Cunningham leads an Interagency Mitigation Monitoring Program training at LaTour Demonstration State Forest.

right: Interagency training workshop on stream crossings in the Santa Cruz Mountains in 2006. Bridal Veil waterfall in Yosemite National Park.

The first effort was the Hillslope Monitoring Program (HMP), which used independent contractors to collect monitoring data from 1996 through 2002. The second program, called Modified Completion Report monitoring, used CAL FIRE Forest Practice Inspectors to collect data from 2001 to 2004.

Data was collected on high-risk hillslope locations, such as forest roads, landings, skid trails and stream crossings. Together, these projects evaluated over 600 randomly selected Timber Harvesting Plans (THPs) that had experienced one to four winter periods following the completion of logging and they produced remarkably consistent results.

The Hillslope Monitoring Program found that FPRs developed to protect water were successfully implemented 94 percent of the time. Required practices were found to be effective in preventing erosion when properly implemented.

Both monitoring programs found surface erosion was usually caused by not following the rules on forest roads or at watercourse crossings. They also found that watercourse and lake protection zones retained high levels of post-harvest tree canopy.

Monitoring at stream crossings showed that culvert plugging, caused by wood and/or sediment blocking the pipe opening, diversion potential, the chance for water to flow down a road if the culvert plugs, and road drainage,

structures near crossings, such as cross drain culverts, waterbars or dips installed to divert water off the road, are common problems. Approximately 20 percent of the stream crossings in both programs had significant rule implementation and/or effectiveness problems.

In 2000, the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection adopted a rule requiring Registered Professional Forester (RPF) supervision of active timber operations to improve rule implementation, partially in response to these monitoring results. In addition, the Hillslope Monitoring Program Report specifically recommended rules allowing landowners to use a Road Management Plan to address existing road-stream crossing problem sites, which were recently adopted by the Board.

A new Interagency Mitigation Monitoring Program began in 2005 to provide information about forest practices at high-risk sites where measures have been specially designed to protect water quality. Pilot project work focused on watercourse crossings and nearby roads that drain into crossings, since these are high-risk areas for sediment delivery into streams. Preliminary pilot project results have shown that problems are often the result of improper installation practices.

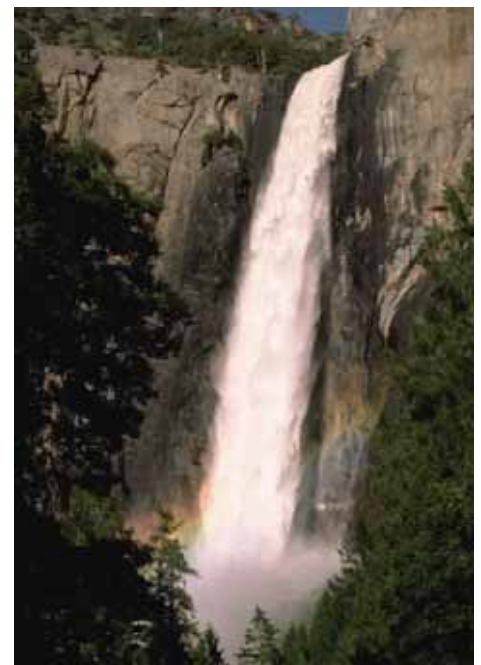
The pilot work is being conducted by two interagency teams composed of representatives from CAL FIRE, the California Department of Fish and Game, the California Geological Survey and the Regional Water Quality Control Boards.

This team approach provides a balance of interests for all of the agencies involved in the timber harvesting plan review for greater agency and public confidence in the monitoring results.

In 2007, CAL FIRE entered into the second phase of the Modified Completion Report program, now called Forest Practice Rules Implementation and Effectiveness Monitoring. CAL FIRE watershed staff members are currently training CAL FIRE Forest Practice Inspectors on updated monitoring procedures.

In addition, CAL FIRE has also supported several cooperative in-stream monitoring projects in watersheds throughout California, including: Caspar Creek in Mendocino County, where data has been collected since 1962, Garcia River in Mendocino County, South Fork Wages Creek in Mendocino County (CAL FIRE and Campbell Timberland Management), Judd Creek in Tehama County (CAL FIRE and Sierra Pacific Industries), and Little Creek in Santa Cruz County (CAL FIRE and Cal Poly-San Luis Obispo).

These instream projects are an important component of our overall water quality monitoring program. They are measuring sediment concentrations in water samples and recording the turbidity, or clarity of the water, at automated monitoring stations. This data helps provide connections between stream channel conditions and management practices occurring on hillslopes in the watershed.





“Nearly 85 percent of California’s average annual runoff is produced from forested watersheds.”

The main conclusions from all the monitoring completed to date are that California’s water quality-related rule implementation rate is among the highest of any of the Western United States, and that when properly implemented, the FPRs are effective in protecting water quality.

Monitoring results have also shown, however, that improvements are needed in watercourse crossing design, construction, maintenance and for road drainage, particularly near stream crossings.

To improve practices on roads and at stream crossings, there have been several efforts over the past five years, including the development of a guidebook on how to properly design crossings for 100-year

flood flows and the passage of wood and sediment.

In addition, CAL FIRE and other State Resource Agency departments, University of California Cooperative Extension, and professional forestry organizations have sponsored numerous workshops for foresters, landowners, and regulators on how to address road problems and how to properly design and construct road-stream crossings.

Continued monitoring will help us determine whether these training efforts have achieved our goal of water quality protection through improved practices near watercourse crossings, reducing sediment input into fish-bearing streams.

The final reports for the Hillslope Monitoring Program and the Modified Completion Report Monitoring Program are available online at:

- www.bof.fire.ca.gov/pdfs/ComboDocument_8_.pdf
- www.bof.fire.ca.gov/pdfs/MCRFinalReport_2006_07_7B.pdf

Other MSG monitoring reports and information are available at:

- http://www.bof.fire.ca.gov/board/msg_geninfo.asp.

The crossing design guidebook is available at:

- http://www.fire.ca.gov/rsrc-mgt_content/downloads/100yr32links.pdf.

above: Clay Brandow, CAL FIRE, leads Forest Practice Rules Implementation and Effectiveness Monitoring training for the CAL FIRE Nevada-Yuba-Placer Unit foresters near Georgetown.

More than Orange Jumpsuits

Conservation crews make a positive difference in communities



By Leah Sandburg, Office Technician, Lassen-Modoc Unit

CAL FIRE's Conservation Crews improve the community by working on different projects such as, brushing along roadsides, developing fuel breaks, building fences, maintaining trails at state parks and providing fire hazard reduction around schools.

Conservation Crews can perform project work for federal, state and local government agencies. The location of the camp influences which agencies the camp works for.

Intermountain Camp is fortunate to be surrounded by national forests, state parks, wildlife refuges, state highways and several small cemeteries, schools and fire districts.

The camp has been a part of the community for over 45 years and has established itself as a valuable resource.

The camp holds a stakeholder meeting every other year and invites local government agencies to attend so they can learn about the Camp Program and what it has to offer.

Intermountain Camp also sends out an annual letter which summarizes the year's accomplishments in both conservation work and emergency response.

Maintaining a close relationship with other agencies and letting them know what conservation crews have to offer allows the camp to make a difference in the community.

Intermountain Crew 3 recently worked one of those projects where the crew felt especially proud of their efforts. Barbara Joiner, a member of the Lookout Cemetery District, a project sponsor and two other members approached Intermountain Conservation Camp about helping them revitalize their cemetery. Many of the headstones had settled into the earth or were leaning precariously.

One section of the cemetery needed special attention. "We had for some time wondered just how we were going to take on the undeveloped western portion of the cemetery which had become so overgrown," Joiner continued, "We could never have achieved what the crew accomplished on our own. Their service means a great deal to our community."

Captain Todd Garber supervised Intermountain Crew 3, who leveled the headstones, trimmed trees and shrubs, and removed vegetation in the undeveloped section of the cemetery.

The project sponsors were appreciative of the work. Joiner said, "We are especially thankful for the caring expressed by so many of the men in raising and improving some of the historical tombstones. It really feels good to know that others believe we should continue to respect these memorials as many of these families have long since passed on."

"We could never have achieved what the crew accomplished on our own. Their service means a great deal to our community."





Fire Safety K9 Passes Away

Dalmatian served CAL FIRE for eight years

Ahren S. Fox, Fire Safety K9
May 21, 1992—December 8, 2007

By Gordon Winningham, Fire Caption, CAL FIRE Academy

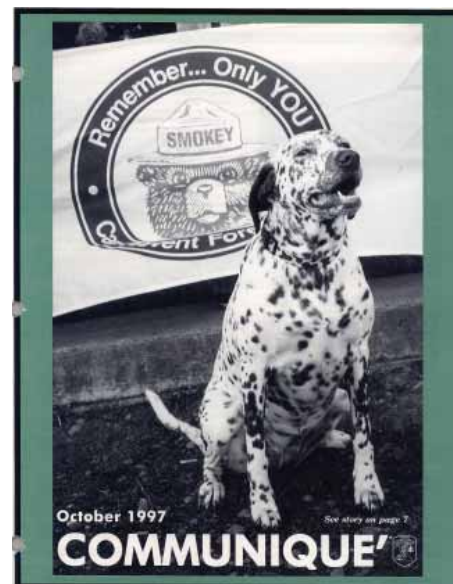
Brothers and Sisters, Friends and Family,

It is with great sadness that Catherine and I write to let you know of the passing of Ahren S. Fox, Fire Safety K9 on Sat., Dec. 8, 2007, at 1 p.m. She was 15 ½ years old.

I write to you because all of you knew Ahren as more than a pet. Catherine and I realized what a blessing she was the day, at six weeks old, she came to work to visit me at Twain Harte FFS. Before long the neighborhood kids were at the station to visit the "Fire Dog". This was the beginning of the Ahren S. Fox Fire Safety K9, Fire Prevention program. Ahren's "scootchie" command and her "stop-drop-and roll" not only made children laugh, but gave me the opportunity to teach them fire safety. Ahren's program was one

of the first three programs of its kind in the nation. The others were at FDNY in New York and Metro Dade Fire and Rescue in Dade County, Florida. Ahren was the last surviving Fire Safety K9 of the original three.

In her eight-year career as a Fire Safety K9 she visited with over 50,000 children of all ages, had newspaper and television exposés done about her, raised money for burn survivor camp, and went to burn camp to play, swim, and comfort burned survivors. She even did a radio interview. Ahren had numerous articles about her in local newspapers, television and radio stations. She was in our Department's Communique' magazine and was on the cover of the October 1997 edition. Ahren was featured in a 2002 firefighters' calen-





"The one absolutely unselfish friend that a man can have in this selfish world, the one that never deserts him and the one that never proves ungrateful or treacherous is his dog."

dar, which raised money and put thermal imaging cameras in service with Fresno County Fire Protection District, Fresno and Clovis Fire Departments.

In 1999, Ahren joined CAL FIRE Firefighters Honor Guard, becoming the only canine Honor Guard member in the nation. In 2001, at the CAL FIRE Firefighters' convention in Fresno, then Union President Tom Gardner accepted a motion from the delegation to vote Ahren an honorary CAL FIRE Firefighters Local 2881 member. IAFF General Secretary Harold Schaitberger was the first to congratulate her. That same weekend Ahren was a part of the 9/11 memorial dedication at Pelco in Clovis, CA. As an Honor Guard member, Ahren participated in many events from Line of Duty Death funerals to parades and dedications. She was a part of CAL FIRE's 100-year celebration at the State Capital in 2005.

Catherine and I write to you not only to share the pride we have in the accomplishments of Ahren S. Fox, Fire Safety K9, but also to thank all of my Brothers and Sisters for your support and commitment to her Fire Prevention and Honor Guard careers. Union Presidents, Department Directors, General Union Members, Engine Company Firefighters and everyone in between supported Ahren. Ahren slept in the Director's office and in firefighter's beds. Union Officers took her for walks and Deputy Directors and corporate presidents carried her water dish. Our words can't come close to the heart-felt thanks we owe to all of you. Nor can words convey the anguish in our hearts. So I leave you with a quote from our local newspaper. This is a letter-to-the-editor written by another proud and grateful dog owner.

Union Democrat, Sonora CA.
January 2006

For Lumpy
To the Editor:

I recently suffered the heart-wrenching task of "putting to sleep" my wonderful retriever, Lumpy O'Mulligan, while my wife, hugging Lumpy and sobbing, bid him goodbye as the life-ending fluid entered his veins.

Having eulogized many departed relatives and friends, I could do no less for Lumpy, and found the perfect tribute. George Vest, a 19th century US Senator and Lawyer from Missouri, concluded a canine wrongful-death trial by telling jurors, in part:

"The one absolutely unselfish friend that a man can have in this selfish world, the one that never deserts him and the one that never proves ungrateful or treacherous is his dog. A man's dog stands by him in prosperity and in poverty, in health and in sickness. He will sleep on the cold ground, where the wintry winds blow and the snow drives fiercely, if only he may be near his master's side. He will

kiss the hand that has no food to offer, he will lick the wounds and sores that come in encounters with the roughness of the world. He guards the sleep of his pauper master as if he were prince. When all other friends desert, he remains. When riches take wings and reputation falls to pieces, he is as constant in his love as the sun in its journey though the heavens.

"If fortune drives the master forth an outcast in the world, friendless and homeless, the faithful dog asks no higher privilege than that of accompanying him, to guard against danger, to fight against his enemies, and when the last scene of all comes, and death takes the master in its embrace, and his body is laid away in the cold ground. No matter if all other friends pursue their way, there by his grave side will the noble dog be found, his head between his paws, his eyes sad but open in alert watchfulness, faithful and true even in death."

John Woods
Sonora

Yours in Brotherhood,
Gordon and Catherine Winningham
12/9/2007



Tonya Hoover, Assistant State Fire Marshal

By Mallory Fites, Student Assistant, Communications

Assistant State Fire Marshal Tonya Hoover was appointed by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger Sept. 4, 2007. She's been actively involved in fire prevention, public education and risk mitigation for 20 years. We took some time to learn more about her career and position with CAL FIRE:

What makes coming to work fulfilling for you each day?

First of all, the opportunity to do what I love doing everyday. I also hopefully am able to mentor and offer a wider view of things and to engage with folks in subject matter that's dear to my heart.

What's the hardest part about your job?

The hardest part of my job, I'll be honest, is being placed in a different environment with a different set of rules, a different system and getting to know how that system operates and what's the best way of getting things accomplished.

The hardest thing is I'm the kind of person who likes to start off running and then it's like wait a second, we have to do this first! Sometimes I'm not the most patient person in the world and I ask a lot of questions.

What have been your biggest career accomplishments?

I've always wanted to be a Fire Marshal. I had a position with a very supportive community and supportive fire chiefs at Morago-Orinda Fire which allowed me to grow and explore avenues that weren't typical of a fire bureau. I was able to step outside the box and use great technology during my time there.

The second was to have my peers give me the Northern California Fire Prevention Officers' Charlie Grey Award for Outstanding Service to Nor Cal Fire Prevention Officers. When your peers can say you did something right when you were acting for the benefit of everyone... for me it was like getting the Oscar!

Also having the opportunity to serve state government, that is an accomplishment. I've spent 20 years watching people go to the Office of the State Fire Marshal thinking to myself that's pretty cool. They're true leaders in the fire service.

What are some of your hobbies and interests outside the office?

My hobby became my passion and my passion is my profession. I enjoy talking to people, I love sharing information, I like finding out what other people are doing and how they're interacting.

I also enjoy skiing; I'm getting better with every season. I enjoy being out in the snow. I love antiquing and I love the hunt for something. I read short articles and I like to gather information that will help me in my day-to-day work.

I love watching my daughter grow. She's experiencing all sorts of things as a teenager.

I ride my bike when the weather is nice. I love turning my iPod, which my daughter bought me, on to my favorite music and going for a walk.

Where do you see CAL FIRE in the future?

I think that CAL FIRE is the premier fire



service for the State of California. We're the largest fire department in California and we're probably the largest fire department in the Country.

I see CAL FIRE being a model in how integrating a large agency can be successful and it illustrates how to move the fire service forward.

There will be constant issues as simple as collar brass and working conditions to bigger issues such as, how we purchase apparatus and work with other agencies. All these wants and needs have money attached to them so we will continue to struggle with the same things local government struggle with.

We are in a dynamic time, we have the support to think outside the box and not a whole lot of state agencies can say that.

Our employees are extremely dedicated to the cause and I wouldn't have taken this position if I wasn't either.

CAL FIRE sets the model for departments all over the country. If you can have an agency of our size that can communicate internally back and forth, the information flow is great. When the fire planning folks can share information that can be used for operations, you know the system is working.

Sharing that information is important for how we slow fire, attack fire and prevent fire.

Meet CAL FIRE's New Chiefs...

Becky Robertson, Assistant Region Chief, Southern Region

By Mallory Fites, Student Assistant, Communications

On Jan. 1, 2008 Rebecca (Becky) L. Robertson was appointed to be the assistant region chief for the Southern Region by Director Ruben Grijalva.

Robertson finds that each day presents different challenges, issues and opportunities.

"I like to tinker with the CAL FIRE "stuff" to try to make it better, run smoother, take less time, have less impact on folks, produce bigger dividends. When my tinkering is successful, then I feel good."

Robertson started her career with CAL FIRE in 1984 working in the Fresno Region Office. While at Fresno-Kings, she also worked as the Eastern and Western Operations division chief and as the deputy chief.

In 2001, Becky was promoted to the staff chief of Management Services for the Southern Region. While working as the Region's staff chief, she performed a special assignment in Sacramento as the chief

of Labor Relations and Human Resources. In 2006, she served as the interim Fresno-Kings unit chief until the current unit chief was assigned; this was the hardest job Robertson had during her career.

"Through a whole team and an entire unit effort we were able to stabilize the unit and the Schedule A contract. We were also able to set the unit up to move forward. In the end, it may be the best thing I have ever done for the department."

The hardest part about her job is finding enough time to accomplish everything.

When she has time, Robertson enjoys spending time working in her garden, hiking, creating pottery, painting, knitting, and baking. She also enjoys making candy and collecting rocks.

"CAL FIRE has a number of large challenges facing the department over the next few years," Robertson continued, "How we react as a team to the big chal-



lenges and how we address the smaller challenges will determine what the department looks like in the end".

"One of the strongest components of CAL FIRE has always been its employees. I know there are thousands of excellent folks already making a difference for the department's future."

Kevin Olson, Department Training Chief, Sacramento Headquarters

By Mary Beth Kihlthau, Student Assistant, Fire Protection, Sacramento Headquarters

In July 2007, Chief Kevin Olson was promoted to department training chief of CAL FIRE. Chief Olson began his career with CAL FIRE in 1980 with the Fresno-Kings Unit as a firefighter I. Over the past twenty-seven years, Chief Olson has worked in Tulare, San Bernardino, Riverside and San Luis Obispo. He came to Sacramento Headquarters, where he oversaw the Fire Protection Automation programs.

Chief Olson remembers the years as a fire captain at the Oak Glen Camp as one of the highlights of his career with CAL FIRE. He says that the camaraderie and friendships made there will stay with him for a lifetime. Chief Olson said the change of CDF to the CAL FIRE mission shows how the department is evolving and mov-

ing forward. Chief Olson said, "The ever evolving CAL FIRE mission shows that the department is moving forward, growing and is on a constant path for improvement." He recognizes that developing and keeping training current is a challenge but that it's a vital part to the success of CAL FIRE.

Throughout his career, Chief Olson has been involved in various cadres and committees. He is very involved at the Holy Cross Church and School in West Sacramento as the chairperson of the finance and facility committees. He currently lives in the Sacramento area with his wife, son, identical twin daughters and cat, Pickles.



Ralph Minnich, Unit Chief, Humboldt-Del Norte Unit

By Yvonne DiLeo, Office Assistant, Humboldt-Del Norte Unit

The Humboldt-Del Norte Unit of CAL FIRE welcomed Ralph H. Minnich on July 1, 2007, as their unit chief.

Chief Minnich, who has over 30 years of experience, began his career with CAL FIRE in the Butte Unit. His past positions include Northern Region deputy chief, Northern Operations Center assistant chief, Shasta-Trinity Unit battalion chief and Shasta-Trinity Unit forester I.

In 1976, Minnich graduated from the University of Washington with a Bachelor of Science degree in Forest Resources. He is a Registered Professional Forester, Advanced Peace Officer, possesses a Limited Service Teaching Credential with California Community Colleges and is a member of the Society of American Foresters and the Shasta County Peace Officers Association.

Chief Minnich has extensive training as an incident commander, operations sec-

tion chief, situation unit leader (Instructor), and has received numerous awards including CAL FIRE's Sustained Superior Accomplishment, Supervisory Superior Performance and Employee of the Year for the Shasta-Trinity Unit.

Minnich's diverse experiences and respected reputation will help to promote his goals of fostering healthy, productive relationships within the Unit and with local cooperative agencies that are responsible for the protection of natural resources.

The unit's lands extends from the Oregon border, 180 miles south to the Mendocino County line. The Unit includes portions of watersheds in the Smith, Klamath, Mad, Trinity, Van Duzen, Mattole and Eel Rivers. The Unit's Resource Management program is responsible for reviewing 300 to 350 Timber Harvest Plans annually.



Minnich and his wife Sunny have three grown daughters. The oldest, Jennifer, lives in Seattle while their twin daughters; Megan lives in Sacramento and Lindsey lives in San Diego.

Bernie Paul, Unit Chief, Siskiyou Unit

By Ron Bravo, Fire Prevention Battalion Chief, Siskiyou Unit

On Sept 17, 2007, Bernie Paul was appointed unit chief of the Siskiyou Unit and on Oct. 16 as Siskiyou County fire warden by the Board of Supervisors. Chief Paul's career started with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) in 1974 as a firefighter I in the Butte Unit. In 1977 and 1978 he was a firefighter II in the Fresno-King Unit.

Paul brings to his new position years of experience as he worked in the private sector as the owner and operator of a logging company in Nevada County from 1979 through 1984.

Chief Paul obtained permanent status at CAL FIRE in 1986 as a heavy fire equipment operator (HFEO) in the Nevada-Yuba-Placer Unit before taking a training and development assignment as a fire captain in 1990. In 1994, he transferred to the Siskiyou Unit.

Chief Paul later served as a fire captain specialist and then promoted to battalion chief of Fire Prevention in 1997. In 2001, he was promoted to assistant chief of Fire Prevention for the Northern Region. With Paul's interest in training, he has been assigned to the Leadership II Cadre for over ten years, Agency Rep Class, the National CIMC Cadre and the Steering Committee. He was instrumental in re-writing the Railroad Fire Prevention Guide and the 9400 Handbook.

In 2004, he was assigned as the assistant chief of operations in the Siskiyou Unit and Siskiyou County deputy fire warden. Chief Paul has also served on CAL FIRE's Incident Command Teams as an information officer, deputy incident command and as incident commander. "I have truly enjoyed being part of the Team," Paul said.



Paul and his wife LeeAnn live in Yreka with their son Jarrett, who is still in high school. His older son, Ryan, is attending college in Spokane, Washington.



Medal of Valor

On December 4, 2007, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger awarded the Governor's Medal of Valor to six CAL FIRE employees who demonstrated extraordinary bravery and heroism in saving a life. The firefighters received the Medal of Valor, the highest honor that California bestows upon its public servants, as part of a ceremony recognizing 31 state employees.

David Shew of Napa

On April 27, 2007, CAL FIRE Battalion Chief Shew risked his own personal safety by rescuing an intoxicated, suicidal victim from jumping off a bridge. Chief Shew was waiting for a traffic signal when he noticed a man getting ready to jump off an over crossing. Chief Shew was able to grab the man's hand and talk him back over the rail saving his life and avoiding a potential traffic disaster.

William Smith of Yorba Linda, Jacklyn Bowes, of Victorville, Kelley DeGifford, of Temple City

On August 29, 2006, CAL FIRE Fire Apparatus Engineer Smith, Firefighter I Bowes, and Firefighter I DeGifford rescued a mother and son who were trapped in a burning building. As an approaching wildfire cut off the escape route for the residents, the engine company instructed the pair to take refuge inside the home, while the crew sheltered them with water from their hoses until the fire passed. The extreme heat and flames caught the home on fire, so the crew entered the house and evacuated the occupants from the burning home and brought them to safety.

Richard (Rick) Moore of Clovis

On July 3, 2006, CAL FIRE Battalion Chief Moore successfully assisted three people to safety during a wildfire in Fresno, California. Chief Moore approached a home threatened by an oncoming wildfire and safely evacuated a family from harm's way. A fourth woman outside the home was unable to get out of the fire's path in time and the fire overran her. Chief Moore helped her to the ground, covering her with his body as the flames passed over them both.

Ignacio Otero, Jr. of Indio

On May 9, 2007, CAL FIRE Firefighter II Otero risked his personal safety by protecting and saving the life of another firefighter during a structure fire. Firefighter Otero was part of an engine company that responded to a fire at a strip mall in the city of Indio. While firefighters were aggressively attacking the fire, the facade and portions of the building cracked and broke away. Without hesitation firefighter Otero moved another firefighter to safety and placed himself between the falling debris and the firefighter, saving the other firefighter's life.

above: CAL FIRE's six 2007 Medal of Valor recipients pose with State Fire Marshal Kate Dargan. *from left to right:* William Smith, Kelley DeGifford, Jacklyn Bowes, Kate Dargan, Ignacio Otero Jr, Richard Moore and David Shew.





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